

IN THE CLAIMS

1. (Currently amended) A method of managing target documents referred to by referring documents, comprising the steps of:

identifying one or more referring documents in a network, each of the one or more referring documents associated with a user on the network and having ~~at least~~ one or more ~~hypertext link~~ links, each hypertext link pointing to a target document stored in a storage;

determining when ~~a hypertext link in the~~ a user deletes one or more referring documents associated with the user ~~ceases to exist~~; and

enabling removal of ~~the~~ a target document from the storage when ~~the~~ one or more hypertext links pointing to the target document cease to exist.

2. (Previously presented) The method of claim 1, wherein the one or more referring documents and the target document are stored in different storage devices coupled over a network.

3. (Previously presented) The method of claim 1, wherein the one or more referring documents and the target document are stored in the same storage device.

4. (Canceled)

5. (Previously presented) The method of claim 1, further comprising the step of decrementing a counter for the target document when a hypertext link ceases to exist.

6. (Original) The method of claim 5, further comprising the step of:  
determining whether the count for the counter of the target document equals zero.

7. (Previously presented) The method of claim 6, wherein if the counter equals zero, further comprising the step of:

sending a message to an author of the target document asking whether the author wants to delete the target document from the storage.

8-15. (Canceled)

16. (Currently amended) A system for managing target documents referred to by referring documents, comprising:

a storage for storing a one or more target ~~document~~ documents;

a processor coupled to the storage, for identifying one or more referring documents in a network, each of the one or more referring documents associated with a user of the network and having at least one or more hypertext link links, each hypertext link pointing to ~~the~~ a target document of the one or more target documents;

wherein the processor determines when a ~~hypertext link in the~~ user deletes one or more referring documents associated with the user ~~ceases to exist~~; and

wherein the storage enables removal of ~~the~~ a target document of the one or more target documents when ~~the~~ one or more hypertext links pointing to the target document cease to exist.

17. (Previously presented) The system of claim 16, wherein the one or more referring documents and the target document are stored in different storage devices coupled over a network.

18. (Previously presented) The system of claim 16, wherein the one or more referring documents and the target document are stored in the same storage device.

19. (Canceled)

20. (Previously presented) The system of claim 16, further comprising means for decrementing a counter for the target document when a hypertext link is ceases to exist.

21. (Previously presented) The system of claim 20, further comprising:  
means for determining whether the count for the counter of the target document equals zero.

22. (Previously presented) The system of claim 21, wherein if the counter equals zero,  
further comprising:

means for sending a message to an author of the target document asking whether the author  
wants to delete the target document from the storage.

23-29. (Canceled)

30. (Previously presented) The method of claim 1, wherein a hypertext link pointing to a  
target document ceases to exist when the hypertext link is deleted.

31. (Previously presented) The method of claim 1, wherein a hypertext link pointing to a  
target document ceases to exist when a referring document having the hypertext link is deleted.